



LOOKING BACK AT COP - LOOKING FORWARD TO A GREEN PORTS FUTURE



Over the past three weeks, UKMPG has been proud not only to publish our own vision of the role ports can play in a sustainable future (which you can see [\[here\]](#)), but also to share the stories of members involved in exciting innovative projects. In the same period, we've also seen many ports make commitments to reach net zero themselves and invest real money in new equipment to make emission reductions a reality.

As our series of guest blogs highlight (which you can read [\[here\]](#)), there's a huge amount of exciting innovation going on within the UK ports sector to drive down emissions. That innovation involves developing the pathways for zero emissions energy sources like green electricity, hydrogen and other alternative fuels. However, the innovation is also about energy and emissions interfaces, with new approaches to data and digitalization, and how the port is a 'hub', bringing together partners and developing solutions for the freight modes visiting the port and surrounding communities.

UKMPG's activity at COP26 highlighted that the work ports are doing to create a more sustainable world is not just about emissions reduction. We were fortunate to chair an interesting morning of perspectives from ports across the world (which you can see [\[here\]](#)), including Peel Ports and the Port of London Authority from the UK, on the vital but sometimes overlooked area of climate change adaptation.

Adaptation is not a substitute for emissions reduction but an essential complement to it. It was fascinating, and even inspiring, to see how ports are

looking at scenarios out to 2100 in considering major infrastructure decisions today. Several presentations highlighted the ‘double win’ from using adaptation, and other port activities – such as the beneficial use of dredged materials – can not only protect but enhance the environment.

Away from Glasgow, the two weeks of COP26 also saw port operators like Hutchison Ports UK and Associated British Ports make important investment announcements for zero emissions and electrified equipment. Others, such as Peel Ports, PD Ports and Belfast Harbour, made or restated their own target years for ‘net zero’, well in advance of the UK Government goals.

The contribution of ports to a zero emissions future is not just about their own activities. It’s about the role they play as vital bases for zero emissions energy generation – both offshore and on land. We talk about this in our vision, and you can see great real-world examples from the likes of Forth Ports, Associated British Ports, and the Bristol Port Company.

In the ports sector, there’s a tremendous amount going on to reduce emissions and develop truly sustainable ports and energy for the future. This isn’t idle talk, but real action and investment in the future being undertaken today. There’s also a tremendous ambition both top down – from Boards and senior leaders – and bottom up – from colleagues and communities – to drive further change. We’re looking forward to making more exciting progress and commitments in 2022 and we hope to see more commitment from the Government to support this progress in the sector.

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